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By Eugene Kozicharow

Washington—Recent suppression of a major study on national defense by Senate staff members has led to a call for congressional hearings to investigate the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service and to determine whether collusion existed between some staffers of the legislative and executive branches of government.

In a letter to all members of the House and Senate, Rep. John Breckinridge (D-Ky.) said a "full and impartial" investigation should be conducted into the handling by staff members of the Senate Armed Services Committee of a report entitled "American and Soviet Military Strength, Contemporary Trends Compared, 1970-1976," and to determine whether it was suppressed to prevent competition with a Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM-10) that presents a more optimistic picture of the Soviet-U. S. military balance (AW&ST July 18, p. 18).

Rep. Breckinridge said certain members of the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee rejected the study and refused to release it for other congressional use. "The inflexible interpretation of bureaucratic ground rules with the CRS [Congressional Research Service] made it impossible for any other potential congressional sponsor to receive the study in anything remotely approaching its original form or a related time frame," he said.

Rep. Breckinridge charged that "an important report that could have helped Congress during the Fiscal 1978 authorization and appropriation process was, thereby, denied the committees directly concerned, the Congress at large and the media and our constituents."

At the same time, Rep. Jack F. Kemp (R-N. Y.) also condemned efforts by the Administration and the Congressional Research Service to suppress what "qualified defense specialists have described as a balanced and informed net assessment of United States and Soviet military power."

**Actions Questioned**

Both House members also criticized internal congressional research staff procedures in dealing with John M. Collins, senior specialist in national defense at the Congressional Research Service and author of the report. They raised questions whether the Congressional Research Service acted properly in certain actions taken directly against Collins in recent months.

Rep. Breckinridge, who tried unsuccessfully to get the Collins report published over a period of several months, said the report was originally requested by Francis J. Sullivan, now staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee, as a follow-on study of the U. S.-Soviet Union balance for publication by the committee.

Rep. Breckinridge maintains that Sullivan and other members of his staff were in contact with Collins as the report developed, but when Collins delivered copies of the finished report on Mar. 9, after a nine-month effort,

report was not what he had asked for. Rep. Breckinridge said Sullivan maintained he had asked Collins to do a "bean count."

Efforts to get Sullivan to release the report by Collins were denied, and under guidelines laid down by the Congressional Research Service, the report could not be made public without approval by the sponsor. "Just why the Collins study was suppressed is still uncertain," Rep. Breckinridge said.

Rep. Breckinridge said suspicions pointed to a conflict between the Collins report and PRM-10. "If confirmed," he noted, "that could indicate collusion between a cabal of Senate Armed Services Committee staffers and highly placed parties in the National Security Council."

Rep. Breckinridge said he attempted through letters to the White House, Defense Secretary Harold Brown and the Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman, Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), to get the Collins report published, but it was not until Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N. C.) read the report into the Congressional Record that it was finally made public (AW&ST Aug. 15, p. 13).

"Meanwhile," Rep. Breckinridge said, "Collins has been, and still is, experiencing strong pressures on a second front."

Rep. Breckinridge maintained that Gilbert Gude, newly appointed director of the Congressional Research Service, after consulting John P. Hardt, the service's associate director for senior specialists, and William W. Whitson, chief of the foreign affairs and national defense division, initiated a series of actions for the Collins report and a subsequent request by Sullivan for another report.

Rep. Breckinridge added that researchers are starting from scratch, "at considerable cost to taxpayers."

Rep. Breckinridge added that Gude also initiated adverse personnel actions against Collins at that time. The actions included a notice filed on June 3 that Collins' work

Committee and the National Security Council conspired to suppress an objective study that deals with U. S. survival and other crucial interests."

"That subject calls for complete investigation by a competent, trustworthy team," he added, "followed by corrective action if foul play is confirmed."

Work and policy of the Congressional Research Service was outlined earlier this year by Gude, a former Republican representative from Maryland, at congressional appropriations hearings before the House legislative branch appropriations subcommittee. Gude said the service had gone through a massive buildup in staff and tasks from 1970 to 1975, and "steadily increased and deepened its analytical support of congressional committees as well as of individual members."

**'Must Review Procedures'**

At the same time, Gude, who noted that in Fiscal 1976 the service had responded to more than 291,000 inquiries, an increase of 19% over the previous year, added: "In my judgment, congressional research staff must now review its procedures to insure the highest level of quality for its product and services. It must tighten up its management structure and practices to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness."

Gude also said he was in the process of revising the review procedure. "We are putting top people into this review procedure," he added.

Rep. George E. Shipley (D-Ill.), chairman of the subcommittee, noted that Gude's steps were in the right direction, because "if I wanted a slanted opinion or a slanted paper [from the service], I could get it."

Gude responded: "I think the soul of the Congressional Research Service is that you can call on us for an objective analysis. That is what we are going to strive to do."

Despite Gude's remarks, other congressional staff members maintained that the Congressional Research Service is having